



Backing Basics

Backing accidents represent a significant percentage (generally 25-30%) of all preventable vehicle accidents within Caltrans.

There are several reasons for the frequency of backing accidents. One is that drivers may fail to exercise as much caution because in the back of their minds they think that a backing accident is not likely to result in much damage or injury to themselves. More often, it is because the operator failed to check the area before backing or have a spotter guide them.

Many backing accidents occur because vehicle operators rely too heavily on their mirrors. Even with the best of mirrors and mirror arrangements, there remain "blind spots" to the sides and behind the vehicle. In order to reduce the number of backing accidents, we must know and practice all necessary preventive measures. Here are some guidelines to consider:

1. Make every effort to avoid the necessity of backing:
 - a. Park in such a position that you can move forward when starting out.
 - b. Avoid making "Y" turns in driveways, side roads, or turnouts.
 - c. If you're working in Maintenance, pulling onto the shoulder to pick up litter, park upstream from the debris and bring the litter to the truck, if it can be safely carried. Always use your vehicle as a barrier to traffic. Go around instead of backing on the shoulder to retrieve the litter.
2. Park in a location away from moving or parked vehicles, unless you are using the vehicle as a barrier, thus avoiding setting yourself up for a collision. This is most important in or near construction or maintenance work zones and parking lots.
3. If you are parked in one spot for any period of time walk around your vehicle to check for children, vehicles, other obstacles and clearances. (Did you ever wonder why some utility companies require a cone to be placed at the rear of any parked service vehicle?)
4. If another employee is present they should be asked to assist the driver by observing the area to the rear of the vehicle, during the backing movement.
5. Before backing, sound your horn with two quick beeps, check the rear and side-view mirrors, watch all clearances and then back **s-l-o-w-l-y**.

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It is often said that backing a vehicle is the true test of a driver's ability. There is seldom any valid excuse for a backing accident. We must follow the backing guidelines and do our best to eliminate backing accidents from our operations. If we all build these preventive measures into our vehicle operations, we can reduce the number of backing accidents.

**“BACKING ACCIDENTS ARE
NO ACCIDENT”**

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SAFER DAYS & HEALTHIER WAYS

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CAN'T SLEEP?

Some sleep experts say that most Americans are getting 60 to 90 minutes less sleep than they need each night for good health. Maybe that chronic fatigue syndrome that you've been feeling is really just a lack of sleep. Our run-run lifestyles today play an ever increasing role in our inability to get to sleep and stay asleep.

Here are a few tips to help you sleep.

1. **Try to keep regular hours.** Keep your biological clock in sync by rising at the same time each day, regardless of how little you've slept. Plan to go to bed early enough to get your required amount of sleep.
2. **Cut back on stimulants.** Coffee, tea, chocolate, and caffeine-containing drinks like many colas should not be consumed less than six hours before bedtime.
3. **Manage stress throughout the day.** One suggestion is to set aside 20 minutes in the evening to do your "worrying". List your concerns; decide what can be done about them, if anything and then put them away for the night.
4. **Develop sleep rituals.** Do routine things like, stretching or reading before going to bed, or try taking a warm bath. Use other relaxation techniques to tell your body it's time to rest. Avoid any strenuous exercise near bedtime.
5. **Control your environment.** Keep room temperature in the mid-60's when possible. Block out light or use a soft nightlight if needed. Lower the lighting in the house half an hour before going to bed. Use earplugs, fans, or recordings of soothing sounds to block out distracting noise.
6. **Don't force sleep.** If you don't fall asleep within 15 to 30 minutes, get out of bed and try reading to relax. Learn to associate your bed with sleeping, not insomnia.

Is it no wonder there are so many vehicle and industrial accidents? With all these sleep deprived people running around half awake, irritable, depressed and slow to react to danger signs, the cost in dollars and human misery can only increase. We must learn how to sleep as much as the body requires to feel awake, refreshed and ready to safely tackle another day. The decision is yours. *Sleep on it!*

Defensive Driving Wisdom

When it comes to the right-of-way, it's nice to
be right...just not dead right!
After all in the end it's not who's right
but rather who's left!

ATTENTION! THIS IS NOT A DRILL!

Would you know what to do?

Each facility is required to have an Emergency Action Plan. This plan is to protect life and property in case of medical emergencies, fires, earthquakes, bomb incidents, civil disturbances, and other disasters. The plan contains phone numbers, special instructions and outlines the procedures to take in the event of an emergency.

Every employee should know what to do and where to go during such emergencies. Supervisors must train employees on the contents of their facilities Emergency Action Plan. All employees are to follow the directions and orders of the Floor Wardens and Emergency Team Members.

TRAIN NOW!

Are You Prepared?

Do you know where the nearest fire alarm is? Fire extinguisher? Are you trained to use it?

Has it been inspected monthly and serviced annually?

Do you know where the closest First Aid kit is? Are you trained?

Has it been inspected monthly and restocked as needed?

From our Records

Q. What is the most common injury that occurs to CT Employees?

A. Muscle strain: 34% of all injuries that occur to CT employees are muscle strains, with the lower back the most common muscle group suffering the strain.

How can you prevent it? Lifting is the most common task associated with low-back injuries. Back injuries are caused from overexertion, either sudden or cumulative. Improper lifting causes low-back injury, while repeated trauma to the arms and hands - shoulder to fingers cause Cumulative Trauma Disease. The most effective means of minimizing back injuries is to maintain fitness, train on proper lifting techniques, job layout, use of mechanical means or just getting help to lift heavy objects.

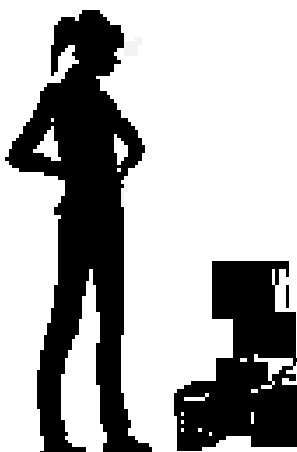
Only **you** can protect your back. Back injuries are preventable.

The following techniques should help reduce the risk of low-back injury:

THINK BEFORE YOU LIFT!

- Always warm up before you lift any load to prevent muscle strains and pulls.

- Stretch your back with upward reaches and continue to loosen tight muscles with simple side and back bends.



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Caltrans workers to model new clothing line



You may see Caltrans highway workers wearing new high visibility garments in the coming months. These employees have been selected to take part in an evaluation of new high visibility vests and pants. Caltrans will eventually adopt this type of vest and pants for use by our forces.

The purpose of this evaluation is to solicit employee input in developing design specifications for a comfortable and functional new garment.

This change is due to a new standard that was developed regarding high visibility clothing. The new standard was developed by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). ANSI provides authoritative guidance for the design, performance specifications and use of high visibility clothing. The standard was developed to ensure that workers routinely exposed to hazards where their visibility can effect their safety are more easily seen. Many states and local transportation departments as well as contractors are adopting this standard of high visibility clothing for their employees.

For Caltrans employees working on the road, a task as simple as moving a traffic cone or patching a pot hole can result in workers being critically or fatally injured if they are not seen by the motorist. The risk is compounded during dawn, dusk or inclement weather when workers become even less visible to passing motorists. High visibility garments such as those being evaluated by Caltrans employees can make workers visible to drivers at a greater distance, providing more time to respond. So, if you happen to see Caltrans employees wearing these new garments...

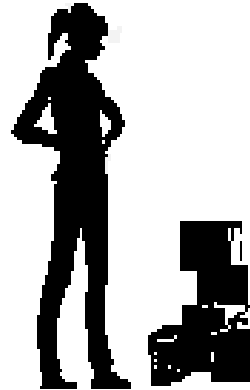
Give 'em a brake.

From Our Records

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LIFTING SAFELY

- Assess the weight, size and shape of the object
- Use mechanical assistance whenever possible.
- Roll, push, or pull the object to its destination.
- Redesign the task to eliminate lift.
- Let your abdomen, legs, and buttocks do the work.
- Get close to the load. Grab the load safely with your hands placed under the object.
- Bend your knees, with feet slightly spread, for balance and stability.
- Keep your head, shoulders, and hips in a straight line as you lift.
- Do not twist.
- Reverse these steps when you set a load down. Move slowly and smoothly without twisting.
- To change direction of carry, do not twist. This is crucial when doing repetitive lifting. Turn your entire body, including your feet.
- Never lift from a sitting position. Sitting puts more pressure on the spine. Stand before you lift.
- Push rather than pull a load.
- When the object is too heavy for one person to lift, admit it, then get help.



KEEP THE PATH CLEAR

- Look at the move before you lift and clear the path you plan to follow.
- If you can't see over the load, don't carry it.
- Use mechanical help (pushcart, handtruck, wheelbarrow) if the load is heavy or bulky.
- Know where the load/item is to be placed.



Remember always lift twice, first with your head, then with your body.

For more information on injury prevention, consult your Caltrans Safety Manual.

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Winter's Coming!

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Protect yourself from the effects the cold. Hypothermia can debilitate one quickly if not protected. Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Wet clothes intensify the cold as the moisture evaporates. Dress in layers and dress warmly. Protect all exposed skin especially hands, feet, ears and nose. Frostbite occurs when the extremities of the body actually begin to freeze. Severe cases may require amputation.

SAFER DAYS

& HEALTHIER WAYS



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